UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
28th meeting
held on
Friday, 3 December 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

General debate (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 17: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS (continued)

(f) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(b) RELOCATION OF BELARUS AND UKRAINE TO THE GROUP OF MEMBER STATES SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 3 (C) OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/232 (continued)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of the publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-794, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/48/SR.28
4 February 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

93-82825 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued) (A/46/6, A/48/16 (Parts I and II) and A/48/32/Rev.1/Add.1; A/C.5/48/9 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/C.5/48/26)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, deplored the conditions under which delegations had been obliged to consider the budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995, as well as the absence of the dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat provided for in resolution 41/213. In addition, the fact that the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had submitted its report on the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget three months after the normal date for presentation had clearly not facilitated the consideration of those aspects. What was more, three weeks before the end of the first part of the current session, the opinion of ACABQ was still not available to the Committee. The situation was all the more regrettable since the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 had become even more difficult to understand on account of the complexity of the restructuring of the Secretariat, the growing number of vacant posts, the freeze on recruitment, and the methodology for recosting the overall level of resources.

2. Since the start of the current session of the General Assembly, the European Union had insisted that the budget, which was the financial reflection of programmes and political priorities, should be adopted in accordance with the procedures laid down in resolution 41/213 before the end of 1993. In view of the difficulties just mentioned, great effort and goodwill would be necessary on the part of all delegations if the proposed programme budget was to be adopted by consensus before the Assembly recessed. He wished to state quite clearly that the European Union would not accept a recurrence of the current situation.

3. The European Union commended the Secretary-General for taking fully into account the provisions of paragraph 10 of resolution 47/213, which requested the Secretary-General, when preparing the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, to give particular attention to the priorities contained in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

4. Turning to the question of real growth in the overall budget, the European Union regretted the lack of clarity and the complexity of the proposal, particularly on the question of recosting. The proposed increase in budgetary resources came at a time when the budget authorities of Member States, faced with serious economic difficulties, were themselves obliged to implement strict budgetary policies. In the current circumstances, it was more necessary than ever for the Organization to implement sound management policies and to redeploy its human and financial resources in a stable overall budget.

5. Despite its precarious financial situation, the United Nations faced new challenges and its Members expected the Secretariat to make innovative proposals for the reallocation of resources. Such reallocations, however, had been

(Mr. Noterdaeme , Belgium)

largely confined to non-recurrent expenditure, including capital expenditure. In his view, the Secretariat had failed to propose the political choices which were necessary to enable the Organization to respond to the new challenges.

6. While noting that the main objective of the Secretary-General in preparing the budget proposals was the strengthening and consolidation of the restructuring, he regretted that those objectives had not been visibly reflected in the proposed programme budget. The European Union hoped that the restructuring, which had been rather turbulent so far, would now enter into a phase of consolidation so that its impact could be analysed. In that connection, it welcomed the statement by the Secretary-General announcing that the Organization had entered into just such a phase which should permit staff to concentrate more on the work to be done.

7. The European Union had taken note of the report on high-level posts and changes in the senior structure of the Secretariat (A/C.5/48/9) and believed that an integrated approach to the implementation of the proposed changes was necessary for them to have any impact on the Organization. The apparently ad hoc approach to the management of those posts was a matter of concern.

8. Turning to the question of programmes and priorities, in the current situation and in view of the budgetary difficulties with which most countries in the world were faced, the time had come to define clearly the objectives of United Nations activities. Such a definition required the clear identification of priority programmes and those areas from which resources could be redeployed. The list of programmes which could be eliminated would result in savings for the Organization and would facilitate the redeployment of resources to the priority areas identified by the Secretary-General. In the absence of such a list, the European Union was itself obliged to conduct the exercise. In that connection, paragraph 35 of the report of CPC (A/48/16, Part II), which dealt with proposals for the Department of Administration and Management, seemed particularly relevant.

9. The European Union supported the three major objectives behind the proposals of the Secretary-General, which were spelled out in the introduction to the proposed programme budget. It wished to reiterate its desire to see a strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the improved management of peace-keeping operations, and appropriate arrangements for the financing of the International Tribunal for the prosecution of violations of international law in the former Yugoslavia.

10. Turning to the new methodology for the presentation of the proposed programme budget, the European Union agreed with the conclusions of CPC. The first part of the programme budget, which summarized the budget proposals, marked a clear improvement over the previous practice, while the presentation of fascicles did not respond to the requests of Member States contained in resolution 47/212 A.

11. The European Union anxiously awaited the report of ACABQ and reserved the right to make detailed comments at a later stage on the amounts proposed in the

(Mr. Noterdaeme , Belgium)

programme budget as well as its programmatic content during the section-by-section consideration of the proposals.

12. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said that Member States, including Japan, had hoped that consideration of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 would afford an opportunity for useful dialogue on the restructuring of the Secretariat. The relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its forty-seventh session had provided the Secretariat with guidelines for the preparation of the programme budget. Those guidelines stressed, inter alia, the need to identify and assess the programmatic impact of the restructuring, to develop workload standards, and to create a concrete policy on decentralization. Unfortunately, the information which had been provided so far was unsatisfactory. Moreover, Members had not been informed whether the relevant intergovernmental bodies had fully examined the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget.

13. The late submission of the budget document had deprived Member States of the opportunity to engage in a comprehensive dialogue with the Secretariat. His delegation strongly urged the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure that such a situation did not recur in future. A budget could not be adopted without due consideration of its proposals. In view of the current financial situation of the United Nations, however, his delegation would make every effort possible to ensure that prompt action was taken on the current proposals.

14. He noted that a full picture of the budget had still not been provided to Member States. The report of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9) would have considerable impact on the budget, while other elements still to be submitted, such as the budget of an international criminal court, would affect its overall level. In order for the General Assembly to adopt a budget with full knowledge of its contents and consequences, it was important for the Secretariat to provide all relevant documentation without delay.

15. The proposed 1 per cent real growth in the overall level of the budget should be examined in light of such factors as possible economies to be achieved through the introduction of new technologies and the restructuring of the Secretariat; the necessity of reducing or terminating activities which had become redundant or which were of lower priority; and the significant increase in real terms in the overall expenditure of the United Nations, owing to the rapid expansion of peace-keeping budgets and the concomitant growth in the peace-keeping support account. The budget level for the following biennium should be set within the level of the budget outline approved by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, by taking all of those factors into account and by the efficient use of resources through appropriate priority-setting. His delegation supported the conclusion of CPC on that matter.

16. While his delegation agreed in principle with the priority areas established by the Secretary-General, namely, peace-keeping and peacemaking, human rights and humanitarian affairs, it was not clear whether sufficient effort had been made before and during the preparation of the proposed programme budget to identify areas of lower priority.

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

17. The consideration of the proposed programme budget and its adoption by the General Assembly determined the level of the Organization's activities in its various areas of competence. Given its nature, that process, and the budget resulting from it, were also highly political. His delegation therefore welcomed the progress that had been made in improving the budget format and in helping Members to understand the full picture. It hoped that further efforts would be made towards that end in the future. At the same time, consideration and adoption of the proposed programme budget did not eliminate the need for the competent intergovernmental bodies to make substantive programmatic decisions. It was in that sense that his delegation understood paragraph 8 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/48/6, Part I).

18. Another difficult question was recosting. In view of the current methodology of budget preparation, recosting was unavoidable. Nevertheless, the Committee should examine whether, in the preparation of future budgets, it was appropriate to calculate the amount of recosting in advance using fixed rates of exchange and inflation, and whether there was a possibility of improving the methodology. It should also determine whether the proposed vacancy rate was appropriate. The calculations of the recosting, which could contribute to the discussion, should be made available to the Committee, as requested by Canada.

19. Turning to the question of peace-keeping operations, it was not clear to him how the transfer of the Field Operations Division to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations would enhance the former's capacity. The common support services provided by the Division covered not only peace-keeping operations but also other field missions. Strengthening financial and management control over the Division's activities was all the more important as the level of resources allocated to procurement had increased significantly, owing to the recent expansion of peace-keeping operations. The Secretariat should therefore provide a clear and comprehensive explanation of the advantages and disadvantages of such a transfer, and consult closely with Member States on that important issue.

20. With regard to the peace-keeping support account, his delegation was fully aware of the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat, in view of the rapid expansion of peace-keeping operations, and it supported in principle the effective use of the peace-keeping support account towards that end. At the same time, he wished to point out that the different roles to be played in achieving that goal by the regular budget and the peace-keeping support account had not been made clear. A significant increase in the number of posts had been proposed on both budgets without an adequate explanation of the reasons for financing them through one rather than the other budget. the same kind of problem was encountered in connection with the recent establishment of the 24-hour operations room. The Secretariat should propose a clear division of responsibilities among the regular budget, the peace-keeping support account, and the budgets of individual peace-keeping operations, and should establish the nature of the posts and activities to be financed through each budget. On the question of improving the management capacity of the Secretariat, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to give priority to that area and

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

support it with the resources necessary for the training and selection of personnel.

21. With regard to the proposed transfer of the Office for Project Services to the Department for Development Support and Management Services it was his understanding that the matter would soon be reconsidered by the Governing Council of UNDP and then taken up by the Second Committee. He further understood that there were still a number of key issues to be resolved before that transfer took place. It was of paramount importance to ensure the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development and his delegation looked forward to working closely with other delegations in that area.

22. He welcomed the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to rationalize the structure of the Secretariat in order to ensure clear lines of responsibility and greater accountability. It was clear from the report of the Secretary-General on high-level posts (A/C.5/48/9), however, that the full picture of the Secretariat's structure had not been presented. In order to remedy that situation, the Secretariat should provide information on all high-level posts and positions, established or temporary, whether financed through the regular budget, the peace-keeping support account, the budgets of individual peace-keeping operations, or extrabudgetary resources. While welcoming the establishment of the Office for Inspections and Investigations, which was the first step towards the establishment of a broader audit, inspection and investigation authority, the process utilized had lacked transparency. His delegation had therefore read with great interest the note by the Secretary-General (A/48/640), which, together with the explanation in his report on high-level posts, had clarified some of the matters about which his delegation was concerned.

23. Mr. SWETJA (Indonesia) said that his delegation shared the Secretary-General's concern over the critical financial situation of the Organization. It was also disheartened at the discrepancy between the enhanced role of the United Nations and its limited resources, and between the greater confidence exhibited in it and the worsening payment pattern. Indeed, the Organization's financial situation was so precarious that it threatened its capacity to finance new undertakings. The perennial delays in the provision of relevant reports and documents on that question was a cause of concern.

24. His delegation fully supported the statement made by Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 in the general debate on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 and wished to comment on some aspects.

25. On the question of timing of the submission of the proposed programme budget, his delegation agreed with the conclusion of CPC that, notwithstanding the delays, the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 would be properly reviewed and approved before the end of December. It should be recalled that the budgetary process established by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 also recognized the need for Member States to participate in

(Mr. Swetja, Indonesia)

the budgetary preparation from its early stages and through the entire process. In that connection, his delegation was encouraged by the process of vertical involvement of intergovernmental bodies responsible for programme budgeting at important stages in the preparation of the budget.

26. On the issue of overall resource requirements, the total amount of resources requested by the Secretary-General was above the level determined in the outline and the proposed 1 per cent increase in real growth. His delegation shared the view of CPC that the Secretary-General should adhere to the provisions of resolutions 41/213 and 47/213 concerning the budget outline. The outline, however, was part of the new budget process and was therefore in a developmental phase. The whole exercise should thus be conducted with flexibility and all concerned should be aware that, under the current budgetary procedure, the outline was not an absolute ceiling, but rather a preliminary indication of resources.

27. Priority-setting in the United Nations had always been a difficult exercise. There seemed to be no balance, however, in the treatment of priorities and the priorities of the medium-term plan and issues relating to development had not received adequate attention. His delegation supported the decision of CPC that the priorities of a broad sectoral nature approved in the medium-term plan and in resolution 41/213 should be observed. While he understood that a simple increase in resources did not necessarily reflect increased priority, he hoped that in the implementation of the programme budget such priority subprogrammes would have the first claim on available resources in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations. Since priority-setting was the prerogative of Member States, in the context of their involvement in the preparation of the programme budget, intergovernmental bodies, including sectoral bodies, should spare no effort to determine which priorities should be reflected in the programme budget proposals.

28. Turning to section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, he was concerned that the budget proposal for United Nations interim offices had been put forward without the appropriate mandate from the relevant intergovernmental bodies, particularly since the question was still under review in the Second Committee. He therefore supported the position of the Chairman of the Group of 77 that the assignment of political tasks to the offices was without any legal basis and could therefore prove to be counterproductive.

29. The report of the Secretary-General on the restructuring process (A/48/428) did not provide an analysis, as requested by the General Assembly, of the programmatic impact of the restructuring process. It was therefore difficult to evaluate the programmatic impact of the changes. Moreover, his delegation agreed with the conclusion of CPC that the creation of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development represented a new phase in the activities of the United Nations to promote an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental aspects of development. His delegation hoped that that new orientation would not only prove to be efficient and coordinated but also cost-effective.

(Mr. Swetja, Indonesia)

30. The Indonesian delegation hoped that the Secretary-General would see to it that adequate resources were made available for the various forthcoming world conferences, in particular the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. It agreed with the CPC recommendation for approval of the programme narrative of section 9 (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) but, since the programme duplicated some of the activities of other international organizations, the coordination between the Department and those organizations should be improved. With regard to the incorporation of the Office for Project Services (OPS) of the United Nations Development Programme into the Department for Development Support and Management Services, mentioned in section 10, it was doubtful that OPS would be able to work with maximum autonomy. Furthermore, the Department for Development Support seemed to focus excessively on the least developed countries and tho economies in transition. As the Group of 77 had emphasized, the Secretariat should comply in its reorganization measures with resolution 46/232 and consult closely with Member States and intergovernmental bodies.

31. The substantial increase in the workload of the Centre for Human Rights should indeed be matched by an increase in resources, but the Centre's programme for the integration of human rights concerns into economic and social development activities was not justified. Economic and social activities should be dealt with in the appropriate sections of the budget.

32. The Indonesian delegation noted with regret the delay in appointing new executive heads of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the International Trade Centre. Any further delay would create difficulties for the two organizations. It again agreed with the Group of 77 that the United Nations Office at Nairobi should receive the budgetary attention which it deserved.

33. As the Group of 77 had noted, there was no transparency in the proposed programme budget with regard to extrabudgetary resources. In that connection, the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/90/3) deserved serious consideration. In the current circumstances the arbitrary concept of zero real growth could no longer serve as an instrument of budgetary discipline. Instead, it would render the Organization ineffectual. Too few resources could mean resources wasted.

34. Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria) said that the late submission of the programme budget documents was regrettable, for his delegation would have preferred to have more time to give the proposals the scrutiny they deserved. It endorsed the comments made by the representative of Belgium in that regard on behalf of the European Union.

35. Austria welcomed the priorities identified in the proposed programme budget and in that connection recalled the five priorities for the current medium-term plan approved by the General Assembly. It attached importance to maintaining those priorities in budgetary terms, as the Assembly requested in resolution 47/213.

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

36. Austria did not have a position of principle on the proposed real growth rate of 1 per cent. However, as the 20th largest contributor to the regular budget, it attached great importance to budgetary discipline while at the same time advocating appropriate funding of all mandated activities. The methodology used for calculating the real growth rate was dubious, and the recosting had been calculated at an inflated rate. No doubt the comments of the Advisory Committee would throw light on those technical matters.

37. The purpose of the restructuring of the Secretariat was to enhance its efficiency. In resolution 47/212 B, in which it approved the Secretary-General's restructuring proposals, the General Assembly had also requested him to submit in the proposed programme budget recommendations for activities which would benefit from relocation to the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) and to make recommendations about the status of Nairobi. The Assembly had further requested the Secretary-General to review the role of United Nations offices, in particular Vienna and Nairobi, with a view to improving the distribution of responsibilities among them, on the basis of their relative advantages. All those requests were part of the negotiated consensus on the revised budget estimates, and Member States expected compliance with them.

38. The Secretary-General's proposals to transfer the substantive servicing of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to Vienna and to strengthen crime-control activities were welcome, but they were not an adequate response to the Assembly's requests. The Austrian delegation was confident that the Secretariat would adhere to the Secretary-General's stated intention to maintain the status of Vienna as a main headquarters centre. It therefore would expect additional proposals to be made in the form of revised estimates and that the Assembly would reiterate all its outstanding requests to the Secretary-General.

39. It was hard to understand the merit of some of the proposals to increase the responsibilities of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), in particular responsibility for representation of the Secretary-General to all organizations in Europe, including those located in Vienna, and for stimulation of cooperation with organizations such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Since the CSCE secretariat and its Conflict Prevention Centre were based in Vienna, it would make more sense for the latter responsibility to be exercised by UNOV. CSCE had also decided to establish in Vienna a permanent committee for political consultations and decision-making. The Secretariat must therefore justify the inclusion in the regular budget of the additional costs of carrying out the liaison functions from UNOG when they could be performed at no additional cost by UNOV.

40. Furthermore, the Austrian delegation questioned the usefulness of coordinating certain activities for Central and Eastern Europe from Geneva when it would be more practical for the work to be done by UNOV. It would appreciate information from the Secretariat regarding the implementation of resolution 47/187 concerning certain activities relating to the economies in transition,

(Mr. Sucharipa, Austria)

and regarding its plans for implementation of the request contained in a draft resolution on countries in transition to be adopted at the present session.

41. Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) said that the potential of a rejuvenated United Nations did not lie only in ad hoc peace-keeping or mediation activities but also in the promotion of more balanced international development and cooperation. While the efforts to improve the Organization's efficiency and equip it with the resources to meet expectations, especially those of the developing countries, were welcome, it was also important not to become the slave of dogma. The redeployment operations were not without risk, for any redeployment might hinder specific programmes. The time was therefore ripe to consider whether the Organization's budgetary policy was adapted to the real situation.

42. The Tunisian delegation was not opposed in principle to a reasonable real growth rate, and the rate of 1 per cent was acceptable, for the new challenges meant that the international community must provide more funding. It endorsed the main objectives of the proposed programme budget and agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to strengthen capacities in the political and humanitarian areas. Prevention was a wise policy in both those areas but it required coordinated and well-planned action. Tunisia therefore supported in general terms the Secretariat's requests for resources.

43. The Tunisian delegation understood the reasons for the selection of the four priorities specified in the proposed programme budget, but it stressed the need for balance and realism with regard to all problems, particularly the socio-economic and environmental ones. It would also like to have details of the economies of scale resulting from the reorganization of the economic sectors.

44. Tunisia had always supported the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) which was an operational tool for implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Moreover, the resources allocated to ECA showed only a very small increase and would not be sufficient for carrying out some of the programmes. The international community must focus on the problems of Africa, which were not given sufficient attention in the programme budget. In that connection, the development of human resources must be the priority for future activities in Africa. However, the proposed programme budget did include among its priorities support for the treaty concerning the establishment of the African Economic Community. The economic integration of Africa would certainly help the continent to deal successfully with its challenges and participate as a full partner in international cooperation.

AGENDA ITEM 17: APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS (continued)

(f) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (A/48/106; A/C.5/48/25)

45. The CHAIRMAN read out rule 92 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly concerning elections and paragraph 16 of decision 34/401 concerning the election of members of subsidiary organs.

46. The note by the Secretary-General (A/48/106) indicated that the General Assembly was required to appoint five persons to fill the vacancies which would arise in the International Civil Service Commission on 31 December 1993. According to a further note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/48/25), six persons had been nominated by their Governments for appointment or re-appointment. He had been informed that Mr. Helmut Kitschenberg (Germany) had withdrawn his candidature, so that the number of candidates now corresponded to the number of vacancies. He therefore would take it that the Committee wished to recommend the appointment by acclamation of Mr. Ku Tashiro (Japan), Mr. Antônio Fonseca Pimentel (Brazil), Mr. Mario Bettati (France), Ms. Lucretia Myers (United States of America) and Mr. Alexis Stephanou (Greece) as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 1994.

47. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 138: ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued) (A/47/927, A/48/192, A/48/315 and A/48/421; A/C.5/48/13)

(a) FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS (continued)

(b) RELOCATION OF BELARUS AND UKRAINE TO THE GROUP OF MEMBER STATES SET OUT IN PARAGRAPH 3 (C) OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/232 (continued)

48. Mr. RANDRIAMALALA (Madagascar) said that the number, complexity and cost of peace-keeping operations had increased markedly in recent years. Their cost represented a heavy burden on Member States, particularly developing countries, notwithstanding which all States, including Madagascar, had striven to make a contribution.

49. In such a context it had become necessary to review the institutional framework for peace-keeping operations and the manner in which they were financed to ensure that the Organization could act with optimum efficiency. In that connection he welcomed the establishment of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and of the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund. Further, the Secretariat must seek savings wherever possible and increase the transparency of budgetary procedures.

50. The United Nations must find the means of ensuring an equitable distribution of peace-keeping costs. For that reason his country should be placed in group (d), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/206,

(Mr. Randriamalala, Madagascar)

which classified Madagascar among the least developed countries. His delegation had already made a similar request on two previous occasions. The report on the composition of groups submitted at the forty-seventh session (A/47/484) indicated that all States designated as least developed countries before 1989 were in group (d).

51. No satisfactory follow-up action to Madagascar's requests had been taken, and he had the impression that an effort was being made to postpone the matter from session to session. In that connection the General Assembly had requested the Chairman of the Fifth Committee to establish an open-ended working group of the Fifth Committee to examine the placement of Member States in groups for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses, but that group had so far held only one meeting. In fact, the focus was moving away from the problem experienced by his Government to the broader issue of the apportionment of peace-keeping costs in general, an issue which was likely to take years to resolve. Accordingly, his delegation insisted that its request for reclassification should be considered on an urgent basis.

52. Mr. KOULEBA (Ukraine) said that his delegation supported the proposal made by the Chairman at the 27th meeting regarding the work of the open-ended working group. He agreed with Belarus that item 138 (b), concerning the relocation of Belarus and Ukraine to group (c), should be dealt with separately. The informal consultations proposed by the Chairman should be held before the end of December.

53. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that his delegation had proposed the holding of informal consultations on item 138 (b), although it was ready to discuss other questions affecting other States. Consideration of item 38 (b) by the open-ended working group was not an effective means of proceeding, since the working group had no specific mandate to consider the question of moving countries from one group to another. In any event the working group already had a complex issue to deal with, and the group was not yet in a position to report to the Assembly. The situation faced by Belarus was urgent, and should be dealt with in informal consultations as quickly as possible.

54. The CHAIRMAN said that there were several elements in the Committee's decision to hold informal consultations. First was the time-frame, which was such that the matter must be considered before the session was suspended. A second element was the mandate, in connection with which he had made it clear that the working group would deal first with the question of new Member States, and then with the requests submitted by Ukraine, Belarus and Madagascar. The Fifth Committee could then take action, before the session was suspended, on the basis of the working group's report to it. The other aspects of agenda item 138 would be considered at the resumed session.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.